THE NEW YORK LEDGER

DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE ROMANCE THE NEWS COMMERCE

VOL. XXIV. ROBERT BONNER, COR. OF WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STS. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1868. TERMS, $3 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE. NO. 28.

WHAT THE CRICKETS SAID.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

You would have come last night if you had known
How close I watched for you,
Out in the garden, where the moonlight shone,
Midst deepest evening blue.
The crickets' voices filled the air. I made
Words of them: these were they:
"He comes not! comes not! comes not!" so it
played;
"What keeps? keeps him away?"

We were so gay that night: the others came;
The hours were winged fast;
Some gracious sparks leaped all hearts the same,
And yet 'twas incomplete,
Because you came not. Twice, when breezes blew
Leaf shadows o'er the door,
I fancied, out of hoping, it was you,
Your shadow at the door.

He sang, our Spaniard with the woman's smile,
Our sailor told his tale,
And in the spices of the interwhile,
Sweet whispers stole prevail;
The night turned out as perfumed censers born,
And on was at its best,
When clocks of dreams shall cease in their turn,
To follow some real fact.

And I took all my little role of mirth,
And played it fairly through;
Yet, when cool midnight crossed the quiet Earth,
And hale as ag., "others,"
I from my pillow heard the crickets' cry,
And made of it once more:
"He came not! came not! came not! came not!" just as I
Had made "came not" before.

THE HIDDEN HAND.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE DEPTH OF AN EVENING," "THE DESERTED WIFE," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE NOCTURNAL VISIT.

"Who's there?"
How'st with me when every sound appals me?
"I hear a knocking."
In the south entry! "Knocking."
"Somewhere."

Hagerstown Hall is a large, old-fashioned, wood-built, red brick mansion, in one of the loftiest and wildest of the mountain regions of Virginia.

The estate is surrounded on three sides by a range of steep, gray rocks, spiked with clumps of dark evergreens, and called, from its horseshoe form, the Devil's Hoof.

On the fourth side the ground gradually descends in broken rock and barren soil to the edge of the wild mountain stream known as the Devil's Run.

When storms and floods were high, the loud roaring of the wind through the wild mountain gorges, and the terrific raging of the torrent over its rocky course, gave to the savage locality its ill-omened names of Devil's Hoof, Devil's Run, and Hurricane Hall.

Major Ira Warfield, the lonely proprietor of the Hall, was a veteran officer, who, in disgust at what he supposed to be ill-requited services, had retired from public life to spend the evening of his vigorous age on this his patrimonial estate. Here he lived in seclusion, with his old-fashioned housekeeper, Mrs. Condiment, and his old family servants and his favorite dogs and horses. Here his mornings were usually spent in the chase, in which he excelled, and his afternoons and evenings were occupied in small convivial suppers among his few chosen companions of the chase in the bottle.

In person Major Warfield was tall and strongly built, reminding one of some old iron-limbed Douglas of the olden time. His features were large and harsh; his complexion dark red, as that of one seasoned by long exposure and choice with strong drink. His fierce, dark gray eyes were surmounted by thick, heavy black brows, that, when gathered into a frown, reminded one of a thunder cloud, as the flashing orbs beneath them did of lightning. His hard, harsh face was surrounded by a thick growth of iron-gray hair and beard that met beneath his chin. His usual dress was a black cloth coat, crimson vest, black leather breeches, long, black yarn stockings, fastened at the knees, and morocco slippers with silver buttons.

In character Major Warfield was arrogant, domineering, and violent—equally loved and feared by his faithful and family servants at home—disliked and dreaded by his neighbors and acquaintances abroad, who, partly from his name and partly from his character, fixed upon him the appropriate nickname of OLD HURRICANE.

There was, however, other ground of dislike besides that of his arrogant mind, violent temper and domineering habits. Old Hurricane was said to be an old bachelor, yet rumor whispered that "there was in some obscure part of the world, hidden away from human sight, a deserted wife and child, poor, friendless, and heartbroken." It was further whispered that the younger brother of Ira Warfield had mysteriously disappeared, and has without some suspicion of foul play on the part of the only person in the world who had a strong interest in getting rid of him. However these things might be, Hurricane Hall only Major Warfield, Mrs. Condiment his Rifle old house-keeper, and Wool his

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1868, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

OLD HURRICANE AT THE SICK WOMAN'S BED.

Early in the evening the old hall was shut up closely to keep out as much as possible the sound of the storm that roared through the mountain chasms, and cannonaded the walls of the house as if determined to force an entrance. As soon as she had seen that all was safe, Mrs. Condiment went to bed and went to sleep.

It was about ten o'clock that night, that Old Hurricane, well wrapped up in his quilted flannel dressing-gown, sat in his well padded easy chair before a warm and bright fire, taking his comfort in his own most comfortable bed-room. This was the hour of the coziest enjoyment to the self-indulgent old bachelor, who dearly loved his own ease. And indeed every means and appliance of bodily comfort was at hand. Strong oaken shutters and thick heavy curtains at the windows kept out every draft of air, and so deadened the sound of the wind that its subdued moaning was just sufficient to remind one of the stormy weather without to contrast to the bright warmth within. Old Hurricane, as I said, sat well wrapped up in his wadded dressing-gown, well reclining in his padded easy chair, with his head thrown back and his feet upon the fire irons, toasting his shins and sipping his punch. On his right hand stood a little table with a lighted candle, a stack of clay pipes, a jug of punch, lemons, sugar, Holland gin, etc., while on the hearth was a kettle of boiling water to help replenish the jug if needful.

On his left hand stood his cozy bedstead with its warm crimson curtains festooned back, revealing the luxurious swell of the full feather bed, and pillows with their snow-white linen and lambswool blankets inviting repose. Between this bedstead and the corner of the fire place stood Old Hurricane's ancient body servant Wool, engaged in warming a crimson cloth night cap.

"Fools!" muttered Old Hurricane over his punch—"fools! they'll all get the pleurisy except those that got drunk! And they all go, Wool?"

"Every man, woman and chile, sar!—kept 'em me and condiment, sar."

"More fools they! And I shouldn't wonder if you, you old sorcerer, didn't want to go too?"

"No, Marse——"

"I know better, sir! don't contradict me! Well, as soon as I'm in bed, and that won't be long now, you may go!—so that you get back in time to wait on me to-morrow morning!"

"Thanky, Marse."

"Hold your tongue! You are as big a fool as the rest."

"I take Obie," said Old Hurricane, as he sipped his punch and smacked his lips——"I take this to be the very quintessence of human enjoyment—sitting here in my soft, warm chair before the fire, toasting my legs, sipping my punch, feeling on the one hand to the storm without, and gloating on the other hand at my comfortable bed waiting there to receive my sleepy head—and waiting there to receive my sleepy head—and waiting there to receive my sleepy head—and